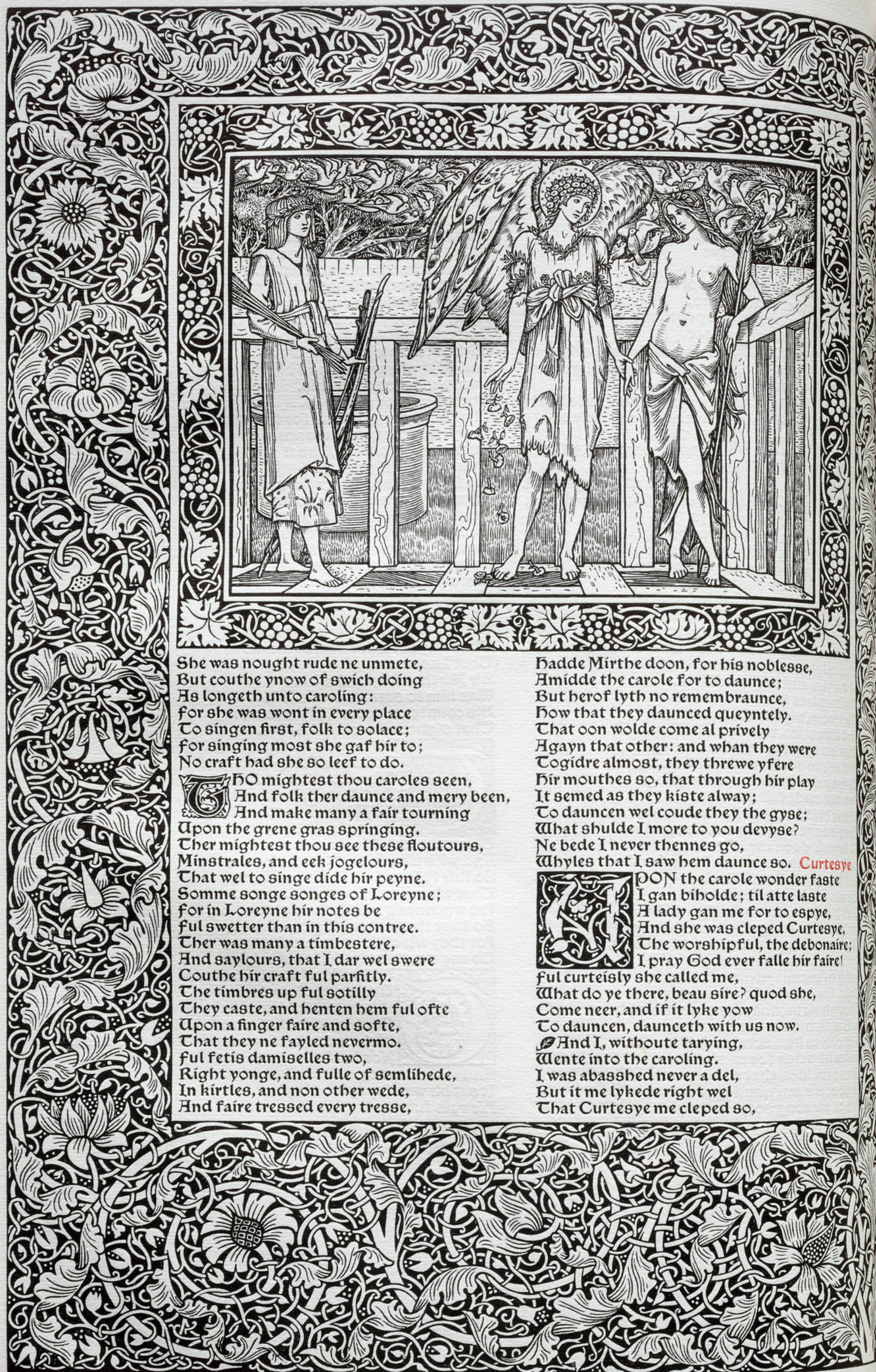




She was nought rude ne unmete,
But couthe ynow of swich doing
As longeth unto caroling;
for she was wont in every place
To singen first, folk to solace;
for singing most she gaf hir to;
No craft had she so leef to do.
THOU mightest thou caroles seen,
And folk ther daunce and mery been,
And make many a fair tourning
Upon the grene gras springing.
Ther mightest thou see these floutours,
Minstrales, and eek jogelours,
That wel to singe dide hir peyne.
Somme songe songs of Loreyne;
for in Loreyne hir notes be
ful swetter than in this contree.
Ther was many a timbestere,
And saylours, that I dar wel swere
Couthen hir craft ful parfitly.
The timbres up ful sotilly
They caste, and henten hem ful ofte
Upon a finger faire and softe,
That they ne fayled nevermo.
ful fetis damiselles two,
Right yonge, and fulle of semlihede,
In kirtles, and non other wede,
And faire tressed every tresse,

Hadde Mirthe doon, for his noblesse,
Amidde the carole for to daunce;
But herof lyth no remembrance,
How that they daunced queyntely.
That oon wolde come al prively
Agayn that other: and whan they were
Togidre almost, they threwe yfere
hir mouthes so, that through hir play
It semed as they kiste alway;
To dauncen wel coude they the gyse;
What shulde I more to you devyse?
Ne bede I never thennes go,
Whyles that I saw hem daunce so. **Curtesye**
THON the carole wonder faste
I gan biholde; til atte laste
A lady gan me for to espye,
And she was cleped Curtesye,
The worshipful, the debonaire;
I pray God ever falle hir faire!
ful curteisly she called me,
What do ye there, beau sire? quod she,
Come neer, and if it lyke yow
To dauncen, daunceth with us now.
And I, withoute tarying,
Wente into the caroling.
I was abagghed never a del,
But it me lykede right wel
That Curtesye me cleped so,

And bad me on the daunce go.
for if I hadde durst, certeyn
I wolde have caroled right fayn,
As man that was to daunce blythe.
Than gan I loken ofte sythe
The shap, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenance and the maneres
Of alle the folk that daunced there,
And I shal telle what they were.

AL fair was Mirthe, ful long & high;
A fairer man I never sigh.
As round as appel was his face,
ful rody and whyt in every place.
fetys he was and wel beseye,
With metely mouth and yen greye;
his nose by mesure wrought ful right;
Crisp was his heer, and eek ful bright.
his shuldres of a large brede,
And smalish in the girdilstede.
he semed lyk a portreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So fair, so joly, and so fetys,
With limes wrought at poynt devys,
Deliver, smert, and of gret might;
Ne sawe thou never man so light.
Of berde unneth he hadde he nothing,
for it was in the firste spring.
ful yong he was, and mery of thought,
And in samyt, with briddes wrought,
And with gold beten fetisly,
his body was clad ful richely.
Wrought was his robe in straunge gyse,
And al togiltred for queyntyse
In many a place, lowe and hye.
And shod he was with gret maistrye,
With shoon decoped, and with laas.
By drucrye, and by solas,
his leef a rosen chapellet
had maad, and on his heed it set.

AND wite ye who was his leef?
Dame Gladnes ther was him so leef,
That singeth so wel with glad
corage,
That from she was twelve yeer of
age,
She of hir love graunt him made.
Sir Mirthe hir by the finger hadde
In daunsing, and she him also;
Gret love was atwixe hem two.
Bothe were they faire and brighte of hewe;
She semede lyk a rose newe
Of colour, and hir flesh so tendre,
That with a brere smale and slendre
Men mighte it cleve, I dar wel sayn.
hir forheed, frounceles al playn.
Bente were hir browes two,
hir yen greye, and gladd also,
That laughede ay in hir semblaunt,
first or the mouth, by covenant,
I not what of hir nose descryve;
So fair bath no womman alyve.
hir heer was yelow, and cleer shyning,
I wot no lady so lyking.
Of orfrays fresh was hir gerland;

I, whiche seen have a thousand,
Saugh never, ywis, no gerland yit,
So wel ywrought of silk as it.
And in an overgilt samyt
Clad she was, by gret delyt,
Of which hir leef a robe werde,
The myrier she in herte ferde.

AND next hir wente, on hir other syde, **Cupide**
The God of Love, that can devyde
Love, as him lyketh it to be.
But he can cherles daunten, he,
And maken folkes pryde fallen.
And he can wel these lordes thrallen,

And ladies putte at lowe degree,
Whan he may hem to proude see.
THIS God of Love of his fasoun
Was lyk no knave, ne quistroun;
his beautee gretly was to pryse.
But of his robe to devyse
I drede encombre for to be.
for nought yclad in silk was he,
But al in floures and flourettes,
Ypainted al with amorettes;
And with losenges and scochouns,
With briddes, libardes, and lyouns,
And other beestes wrought ful wel.
his garnement was everydel
Yportreyd and ywrought with floures,
By dyvers medling of coloures.
floures ther were of many gyse
Yset by compas in assyse;
Ther lakked no flour, to my dome,
Ne nought so muche as flour of brome,
Ne violete, ne eek pervenke,
Ne flour non, that man can on thenke,
And many a roseleef ful long
Was entermedled theramong;
And also on his heed was set
Of roses rede a chapellet.

But nightingales, a ful gret route,
That flyen over his heed aboute,
The leves felden as they flyen;
And he was al with briddes wryen,
With popinjay, with nightingale,
With chalaundre, and with wodewale,
With finch, with lark, and with archangel.
he semede as he were an aungel
That doun were comen fro hevne clere.

HVE hadde with him a bachelere, **Swete-Loking**
That he made alweyes with him be;
Swete-Loking cleped was he.
This bachelere stood biholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes two hadde he.
That oon of hem was of a tree
That bereth a fruyt of savour wikke;
ful croked was that foule stikke,
And knotty here and there also,
And blak as bery, or any slo.
That other bowe was of a plante
Withoute wem, I dar warante,
ful even, and by proporcioun
Tretys and long, of good fasoun.
And it was peynted wel and thwiten.